

HARBOR SEALS

Share the Shoreline: Things You Can Do to Promote Responsible Wildlife Viewing

Hands Off:

Never touch or handle seals. Touching seals, or attempting to do so, can injure the animal, put you at risk and is illegal under Federal law.

Remember, wild animals may bite when startled or threatened and can transmit disease.

Keep Pets Away:

Dogs are naturally curious about other animals in their environment. Seal pups can easily fall prey to dogs. To avoid a negative interaction dogs should be leashed and kept away from the seals on the beach. Older seals may bite in self-defense. Some diseases are infectious to both dogs and seals, and may pose a risk to humans as well, if they come in direct contact with infected animals.

View from a Distance:

If you see a seal on the beach, give it space. Stay at least 150 feet away from the seal(s). Distance will minimize the potential for disturbing a resting animal and/or reduce stress for an animal that may be recovering from illness or injury.

Tip: Observe from a distance using binoculars or a spotting scope if you want to see the animal close up.



Do Not Feed:

Feeding or attempting to attract seals with food, decoys, sound or light disrupts normal behavior and may cause sickness or death from unnatural or contaminated food items, and habituates animals to people. Habituated animals are vulnerable to vessel strikes or harassment, and can be dangerous to people.

What to do when encountering a seal on a beach:

Report sighting to a local marine mammal stranding network member.

- Visit NOAA's Northeast Regional website for contact information: (http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/stranding).
- Or call NOAA Fisheries Service's stranding hotline at 1-866-755-NOAA (6622).



Report Harassment

Seals are federally protected from harassment and capture by the public. If you observe incidents of people or pets tormenting, disturbing or attempting to remove a seal from the beach contact the **local marine mammal stranding network response agency** to report a violation.